

## NATIONAL TEACHER'S DAY

**HON. DANNY K. DAVIS**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 3, 2005*

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in celebration of National Teacher's Day, which is taking place today. This week (May 1–May 7) is Teacher Appreciation Week, and as we continually work to improve the American education system, we should take time to honor the hardworking, patient, passionate and understanding people who are the backbone of this system.

National Teacher's Day began due to the persistence of Arkansas teacher Mattye Whyte who wrote to politicians and education leaders starting in 1944 pushing for a national day to honor teachers. Eleanor Roosevelt persuaded the 81st Congress to proclaim such a day in 1953. In March 1985, the National Education Association, NEA, and the National Parent-Teacher Association, PTA, established Teacher Appreciation Week as the first full week of May, with the first Tuesday remaining as National Teacher's Day.

As a former educator, I can attest to the great responsibility that falls on the shoulders of teachers. This responsibility is accepted with aplomb by energetic, passionate and caring teachers who are dedicated to bettering the lives of their students. Teachers are a guiding force in the lives of our youth, just as they were for us when we were children. As Dan Rather once explained, "The dream begins with a teacher who believes in you, who tugs and pushes and leads you to the next plateau. . . ."

Children are the key to the future of the United States, and we entrust them to the incredible corps of teachers who give everything they have, each day they enter the classroom. Today, let us remember the teacher's who pushed us to greatness and let us show our appreciation for these teachers and the teacher's of today's children, who through their intense dedication leave lasting contributions on our society as a whole.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. RANDY NEUGEBAUER**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 3, 2005*

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, due to official congressional business, I missed Rollcall vote No. 150 on H. Res. 210, a resolution supporting the goals of World Intellectual Property Day. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

## HONORING MARLA RUZICKA

**HON. BARBARA LEE**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 3, 2005*

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the extraordinary life and work of human rights activist Marla Ruzicka. Marla devoted her life to fighting for peace and justice, spending

much of her adult life either abroad working to provide relief to victims of violent conflict, or in Washington, D.C. lobbying for the foreign aid those victims so desperately need. Most recently, Marla founded a non-profit organization called Campaign for Innocent Victims In Conflict (CIVIC), the objective of which is to accurately count the number of Iraqi civilian deaths in the war. While working to gather first-hand accounts of civilian casualties in Iraq, Marla was killed when a car bomb exploded in Baghdad on April 16, 2005.

At the time of her death, Marla had been working to advance human rights and social justice for more than ten years. After hearing a talk given at her high school in Lakeport, California by a staff member of the international non-profit group Global Exchange, she went to the Global Exchange office to see what she could do to help. Marla's energy and passion for helping those in need was an inspiration to other activists in the group, and she learned quickly as she became more involved in human rights efforts. In college, Marla chose an institution and course of study that allowed her to travel the world, learning from diverse cultures and helping to facilitate relief efforts underway in a number of countries. In the course of her travels, Marla worked with people impacted by the AIDS epidemic in Zimbabwe, with refugees in Palestine and rural farming communities in Nicaragua.

Following the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, Marla traveled to that country with a Global Exchange delegation. She was so moved by the plight of the civilian victims of this conflict that she met there that she decided to devote her life to providing relief to people in those circumstances. Until the summer of 2002, Marla remained in Afghanistan, where she conducted a survey on the military campaign's effects on Afghan civilians and used that information to get assistance to the families that were harmed. Immediately following her return from Afghanistan, Marla moved to Washington, D.C. to lobby for U.S. assistance for civilian victims of armed conflict. Working with USAID and the Senate Appropriations Committee, Marla advocated the allocation of money to rebuild homes for families that suffered as a result of U.S. military actions.

In 2003, Marla once again heeded the call of duty and went abroad, this time traveling to Iraq before the U.S.-led invasion. In the months that followed, she founded CIVIC and formed survey teams to fan out across the country to gather first-hand accounts of civilian casualties. Marla was instrumental in securing millions in aid money from the federal government for distribution in Iraq, and by the time of her death she had interviewed and routed assistance to thousands of Iraqis.

Today we come together in sadness over the loss of someone who was such a bright light during such a dark time in our world. However, we are also here to celebrate the help and hope Marla devoted her life to giving to people who needed it. Whether pushing the federal government to increase aid to victims of violent conflict, traveling the world to provide direct relief, or inspiring those around her simply by being the vibrant and giving person that she was, Marla never ceased to work for what was right and improve the lives of those around her.

And though the scope and impact of her work in providing aid to those in need is truly

beyond compare, what she has given to us is greater than the measurable sum of her actions. Marla's passion for defending human rights and advocating for those who have no voice led her to challenge convention, and to do so without concern for herself. The conviction and compassion that drove Marla to do everything in her power to help others leaves a bright legacy from which we can all draw inspiration, and that we must all strive to emulate. On behalf of the 9th Congressional District, I salute Marla Ruzicka for all that she gave of herself to our community, our country and our world.

HONORING MR. ANTWAN DEON ODOM ON THE OCCASION OF HIS BEING HONORED ON "ANTWAN ODOM DAY" IN BAYOU LA BATRE, ALABAMA

**HON. JO BONNER**

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 3, 2005*

Mr. BONNER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor Mr. Antwan Deon Odom of Bayou La Batre, Alabama, on the occasion of his being honored by his community on "Antwan Odom Day."

Antwan was born on September 24, 1981, in Mobile, Alabama. During his early years, he worked in Bayou La Batre's seafood industry and during high school worked part-time after class unloading both shrimp boats and crab trucks. Early in life, he became an active football player and played in the Zirlott Park youth football league and, later, at Alba Middle and Alba High schools. Following the merger of Alma and Bryant High schools, Antwan played on the new school's varsity team. His talent and accomplishments on the field drew national attention, and he was named by Parade Magazine to their All-American Team and was also honored as both the Class 6A "Lineman of the Year" and the Super Prep Player of the Year. Antwan graduated from Alma-Bryant High School in 2000 and received a full football scholarship to the University of Alabama.

Antwan's outstanding success on the Crimson Tide football team earned him further accolades throughout Alabama and across the country. Following his freshman year, he was named an honorable mention Freshman All-American by Rivals.com. By the end of his collegiate career, Antwan ranked fifth on the university's all time sack leader list with 21 and had registered 98 tackles, 40 quarterback pressures, four forced fumbles, one fumble recovery, five pass deflections, and two blocked kicks. Rather than finish his senior year at Alabama, he opted to declare his eligibility for the 2004 National Football League draft. In the second round of the draft, Antwan was made the 57th pick by the Tennessee Titans.

Mr. Speaker, Antwan Odom is certainly very deserving of being honored with his own hometown celebration. Although he is a youngman who has progressed quite far in just a few short years and who has developed into one of the leading stars in professional football today, he has not forgotten his roots. To this day, he continues to split time between his hometown and his new home in Tennessee, and the fame he has achieved has done little to diminish his love for his family,